



AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS ON 'IS VOTING BEHAVIOUR CONDITIONED BY CULTURAL NORMS IN INDIA'? EXPLORING VOTER'S CHOICE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BENGALURU: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

Dr. Neena Rani

Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE – Bengaluru)

ABSTRACT

Indian society is the amalgamation of various races, religion, language and so on and has a strong cultural background though diversity is evident. Being a secular country, each person, regardless of their religion, culture, or ethnicity they belong to, they possess freedom to vote. Being one of the largest democracy and ranked as the second most populated country in the world, India widely encourages political participation of the citizen which is apparent in the way elections are celebrated as an occasion. Indians voting behaviour is influenced by their way of life majorly their cultural attitude, set of beliefs and values. This paper focuses on why people tend to vote and the determinant cultural factors that influence the voting behavior.

The study conducted implemented both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Questionnaires were framed in both structured and unstructured manner. The study population comprises of respondents above 18 years of age and who are eligible to vote. The study implemented stratified random sampling technique. Complete responses were collected from 286 respondents. The study indicated that the variables employed and analyzed in the study were all interrelated and has an impact on the voter's behaviour.

The present study further reveals that culture is a way of life adopted by the Indian citizens and all activities have an impact of the culture they possess. Hence the voting behaviour too has a cultural impact.

KEY WORDS: Voting behaviour, Cultural determinants, Elections, Indian Citizens, Political Culture, Sociological approach.

INTRODUCTION:

Voting behaviour has acquired immense significance due to the complex nature exhibited by the voter. It is through voting which is an important political activity that all citizens participate especially in a democracy. The contentment or discontentment to a particular political party or candidate is revealed during elections and several factors are responsible in exercising of their votes.

What do you mean by the act of voting?

Voting is a means of aggregating individual preferences into collective decisions¹

Voting behaviour is the way in which people tend to vote². Voting behaviour is based upon finding the important variable that cause people to vote one way or another.

Socioeconomic factors influences voting behaviour. The emphasis of the sociological approach is on the correlation between the voters and the social settings. This approach examines voting behaviour in the social context, and analysis the effect of the interrelation of the above mentioned factors and their voting behaviour.

How is it that culture influence voting behaviour?

Individuals exhibits certain pattern of behaviour during political participation, and this happens within the society which is bounded by culture. This reflects the political culture of that region which includes a certain set values, beliefs, and practices.

Elections in India are celebrated as national festival where voters participate enthusiastically. Indian voters naturally cast their franchise based on their class, ethnic, linguistic, or religious loyalties which are influenced by their emotive behaviour. Parties have tried to capture popular sentiment by using charisma of their leaders. Popular party slogans such as "India Shining", Nayi soch, nayi ummed opted for the 2014 elections invoke patriotism towards certain parties. Parties promote campaigns by providing promotional items such as T – shirts and publicity material including stickers, banners, and pamphlets to reach out to the public and the modern trend of spreading its message through FM radio and "SMS based campaigns.

As quoted by Daniel Patrick Moynihan 'The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself'³.

As Roy (2009, 2011) notes, individual differences in decision – making have already been stressed by Berelson and colleagues as early as 1954. "The tendency in democratic literature to work with an image of the voter was never justified". But first things first, the main focus of the early studies of electoral behavior was obviously to devise general models before refining them. Nonetheless, if we think of the cross – pressured citizens first described by Lazarsfeld, Berelson,

and Gaudet (1944), who are torn between two parties by their social predispositions, this is one of the first descriptions of voter heterogeneity⁴.

Voting is the perfect arrangement of political participation in any democratic society and in India, the cultural pattern the citizens follow on how they choose their representative and arrive at decision is major subject to be discussed among sociologists and a topic to be discussed in political sociology.

Sociological Model of Voting Behaviour:

The Sociological Model of Political participation and Voters Choice is well explained in the book 'The People's Choice' by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, Joseph Klapper, Elihu Katz and William McPhee. The researchers examined the citizens choice regarding the 1940 presidential election. Majority of the voters seemed to be influenced by their social environment and interpersonal relationships.

It further states that – The sociological approach, characterized in the classic Columbia University Voting Studies (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948), essentially argued that you think and vote who you are. The social environment and the socialization process were seen as the key determinants of public opinion⁵.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

India is a multi-cultural society, and all activities of the people have a cultural impact. Our cultural ideology and societal influence continue to influence how we vote. Hence social system that we belong to has a greater impact on our voting behaviour because social encounters and relationships among individuals are regulated and guided by the relative cultural norms, values, and beliefs. This is because voting behaviour depends upon several determinants which are intertwined. To a large extent, cultural aspects shadow the rational thinking power and hence it is very important that we understand the voting behaviour of the citizens in India. The aim of this research is to explore the impact of cultural determinants on the voting behaviour of the citizens in India. This matter therefore requires a sociological understanding and analysis of the topic to recognize the reality of the problem.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objective of the study is:

1. To examine the behaviour of the people in India while casting their votes.
2. To identify the factors influencing voting behaviour among Indians.
3. To empirically test and measure the impact of cultural determinants specifically on voting behaviour.
4. To analyse if the preference to a particular candidate or party is culture bound.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The main findings of this study rely on the analysis of the survey data, as a result, the success of this research to a very large extent, was dependent on the respondent's openness and willingness to participate. The willingness was evident from how the respondent quickly provided their response but openness in providing proper information is a question to be pondered on. It also acknowledges the fact that although the selection of the sampling population was conducted randomly to include people of diverse demographic and cultural background, the relatively limited sample size and hence this research needs to be supplemented with additional research to support its findings on voting behavior exhibited by the Indians.

The study is limited to the responses collected from only the people from Bengaluru in the age group from 18 years to 70 years only.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather required information. The qualitative data was obtained from secondary sources and is mainly descriptive in nature. The quantitative research conducted by administering questionnaire method and responses were collected from registered voters. The questionnaire administered comprised of both open ended and close ended questions which provided them liberty to answer as per their perception.

Research Gap: This study is different from the earlier study as it analyses the cultural and social factors affecting individuals voting behaviour with special reference to Bengaluru also taking into consideration their educational qualification as well as their occupational role. It differs from the earlier studies with respect to region chosen to study, time period of study, methodology implemented to explore the relationships between variables taken into consideration, factors affecting voting behaviour.

Research Design:

Sampling: Random samples were drawn from different zones which produced a sample of 286 respondents.

The responses to the questionnaire were collected through mailed and self-administered questionnaires. Around 300 questionnaires were distributed but received only 290. But out of this, 4 questionnaires had some questions unanswered hence had to be rejected. 208 respondents filled in all questions from urban areas and 78 respondents filled in all questions from rural areas in Karnataka. Data was collected from voters both rural and urban areas.

Research Design: A cross-sectional, representative sample of the population over eighteen years was selected using a partially purposive sample selection procedure.

Data Collection Techniques:

The major instrument used for this study was Questionnaire which sought information about the locality they belong to, demographic, educational, occupational, cultural, and social factors of respondents. The questionnaire items used both closed-ended and open-ended formats to generate both qualitative and quantitative data as intended. It was administered as a face-to-face interview to some of the respondents. However, information from the oral interview is seen as useful in corroborating the data gathered from questionnaire. Before participating in the survey, respondents were informed about the nature and purpose of research. Maintaining anonymity of their identity was also promised. Data from questionnaires was compiled, sorted, edited, classified, and coded into a coding sheet and analysed.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

This study seeks to provide insights into the most predominant determinants of voting behaviour in India and analysis it with reference to voter's social identity, influence from family members, attitudes differing among genders, educational qualification & occupation, location, ideology, and emotions. The study tries to identify how a multi-cultural country like India, has its voting behaviour conditioned by its culture. The study from this research will add to existing knowledge and pave the way for future research on the behaviour pattern exhibited by the voters in India during elections. The study will also help in our understanding of the various cultural determinants affecting all activities of the Indians.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:**Demographic profile of the Respondents:**

This section on the demographic profile of the respondents provides data about their age, gender, locality to which they belong to, respondents educational qualification, their Occupational status. Examining each of this will clearly help us relate to their family status and identifying the linkages between each variable.

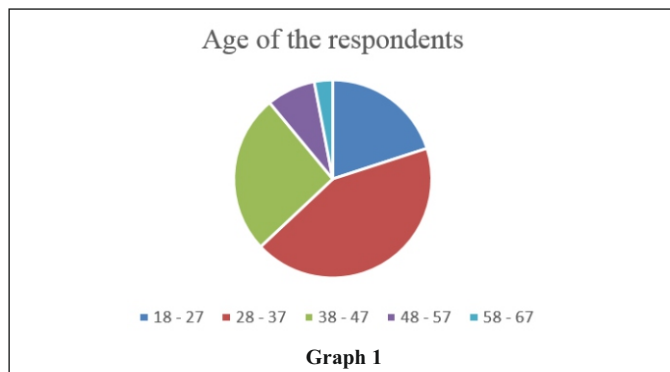
Age:

Age, is a biological trait that determines one's social status. It is an essential factor in research which determines an individual's attitude and perception to the outer world where the individual has a role to play.

Table 01: Age as a variable

Age as a variable	Respondents	Percentage
18 - 27	58	20%
28 - 37	124	43%
38 - 47	73	26%
48 - 57	21	8%
58 - 67	10	3%

Source: Primary Data



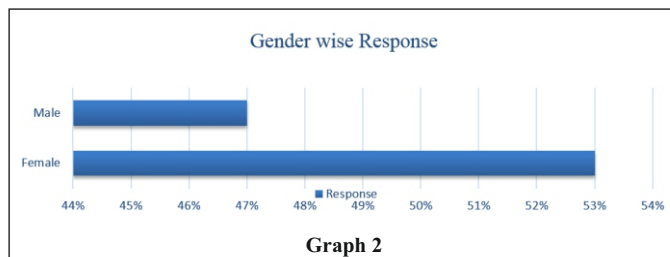
The table 1 above shows that the study collected response from the age group of 18 to 70 years. Response was received more from the age group of 28 – 37 with 43%. The respondents in this age group are more active in casting their franchise and vibrant to follow up with the election process. The age group between 38 – 47 are also moderately interested in election process and the voting process. The respondents between age group of 18 – 27 years are comparatively less interested because some of the respondents are students and busy with their academics and have received their voter ID card recently. They are yet to start to take part actively in election process. The response received from the age group between 48 – 57 years is only 8% as people are engaged with home chores, occupational responsibility, and personal work. The respondents with age group between 58 – 67 years was only 3% as they were either unhappy with the changing governments or policies. Their experience and wise opinion depict that the country is moving towards corruption especially during the election process and are advocating for a fair election process to be held.

Table 02: Gender as a variable

In 1918, at the 33rd session of the Indian National Congress, Sarladevi Chaudhurani introduced a resolution in favour of giving women the right to vote. Madras was the first legislature in British India to pass a resolution in favour of women's suffrage with a sizable majority back in 1921. As a result, women received their first official state recognition as "people" and were granted the same conditions for voting as men. The women of Madras secured the attention of the globe as the news spread⁶.

Gender as a variable	Respondents	Percentage
Female	152	53%
Male	134	47%

Source: Primary Data



The above table 2 indicates that 53% of the response was received from the female population and 47% of the response was received from male population. Women also proved that they are equally responsible for actively taking part in the election process and elect a responsible representative for the country.

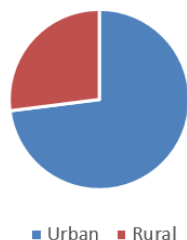
Table 03: Locality as a variable

Locality also influences the voting behaviour. People residing in Urban areas have more accesses to take part in politics as there is less rigidity exhibited in terms of their caste, religion and so on.

Locality as a variable	Respondents	Percentage
Urban	208	73%
Rural	78	27%

Source: Primary Data

Locality the respondents belonged to



Graph 3

Residence: The above table 3 indicates, majority of the respondents that is 73% belonged to the urban community, the reason being people residing in urban areas reacted better to the survey collected. 27% of the respondents belonged to rural population.

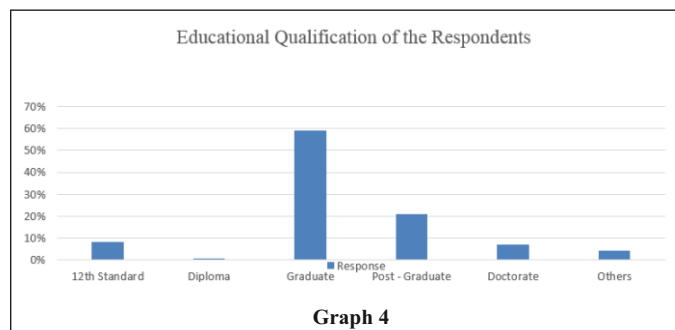
Rural Population are homogeneous in nature, and they have to face the impact of caste, creed, or religion they belong to. Ruralities & Urbanities differ in their voting behaviour, party preferences, choice of the candidates between people living in urban and rural areas.

Table 04: Educational Qualification as a variable

Education is an important variable to analyse the voting behaviour of the citizens. Every additional educational qualification created greater impact on the voting behaviour.

Educational Qualification as a variable	Respondents	Percentage
12 th Standard	22	8%
Diploma	02	0.7%
Graduate	168	59.3%
Post - Graduate	61	21%
Doctorate	20	7%
Others	13	4%

Source: Primary Data



Graph 4

The above table 4 indicates that most of the respondents for this survey belonged from the Graduate level of education that is 59.3%. 21% of the respondents belonged to the Post – graduate level of education. 8% of the respondents were who completed 12th standard education, 7% of the respondents were who have completed Doctorate's. Respondents from other education category (SSLC, below 10th standard) were 4% and who held a Diploma degree were 0.7%.

Education is perceived as an important tool to assist voters to effectively participate in the election process as they will be able to gather better information.

Table 05: Employment as a variable

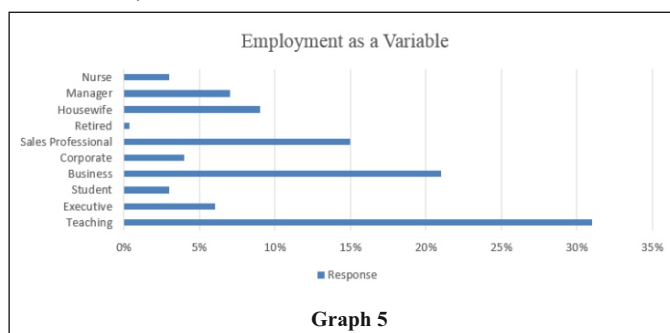
Employment opportunity provides individuals to interact with co – workers and form opinion based on their understandings.

Cohen and Vigoda (1999), for example, have found that political participation can explain attitudes and behaviours in the workplace, reversing the relationship between the two variables.

Employment as a variable	Respondents	Percentage
Teaching	89	31%
Executive	15	6%
Student	11	3%
Business	60	21%
Corporate	12	4%

Sales Professional	44	15%
Retired	01	0.34%
Housewife	26	9%
Manager	19	7%
Nurse	09	3%

Source: Primary Data



Graph 5

The above table 5 reflects that most of the respondents for this survey belonged from the Teaching category that is 31%. They feel that update of political knowledge is very essential for their profession. 21% of the respondents were entrepreneurs and Businessmen. People from this profession feels that possessing political knowledge assist them in their profession as it also has relevance in updating their political knowledge and the recent policies related to business. 15% of the respondents were sales professionals who too feels political knowledge is very necessary and helps their profession, 9% of the respondents were housewives who were free to discuss on politics to their friends and able to gain knowledge on the same. 7% of the respondents were from the Managerial level who discussed politics to their colleagues when they were free. Respondents who are from the Executive level of occupation were 6%. Respondents from other occupation such as Nurses, Students formed 3% and Retired professionals formed were 0.34% respectively.

Various Occupational status of the citizens influence their political behaviour.

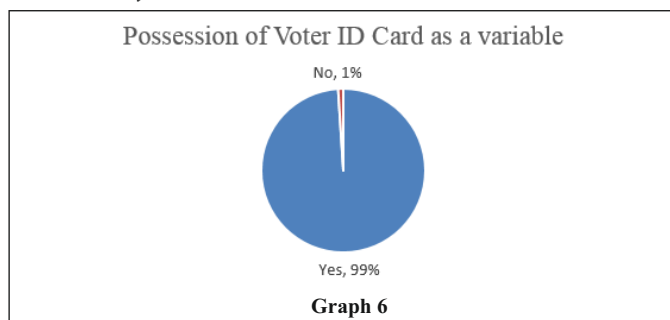
Variables responsible to determine the voters behaviour:

Table 06: Possession of voter ID card as a variable

Election Commission of India issues ID card to eligible citizens of the country to cast their vote during elections. Possession of Voter Identity Card is mandatory.

Possession of Voter ID Card	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	282	99%
No	4	1%

Source: Primary Data



Graph 6

The above table 6 indicates that 99% of the respondents possessed Voter Identity card and only 1% did not possess Voter Identity card because they had just completed 18 years of age and are yet to apply for Identification card.

Issue of Voter Identity card assist to improve the accuracy of election process.

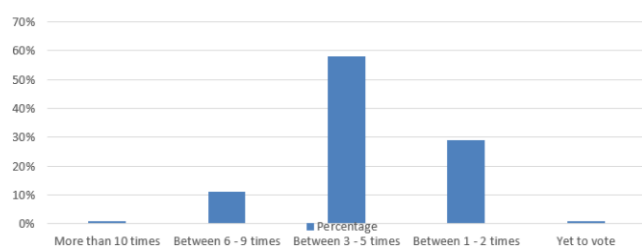
Table 07: Number of times the respondents casted their vote as a variable

Representatives in India are elected once in 5 years. The right to vote gives the citizens the right to elect a capable leader. The number of times a voter cast their votes has a relation with their age and interest.

Number of times the respondents casted their vote	Respondents	Percentage
More than 10 times	04	1%
Between 6 – 9 times	34	11%
Between 3 – 5 times	168	58%
Between 1- 2 times	77	29%
Yet to vote	03	1%

Source: Primary Data

Number of times the respondents casted their vote as a variable



Graph 7

The above table 7 indicates that 58% of the respondents have voted more than 3 - 5 times. 29% of the Voters have casted their vote 1 or 2 times during the elections. 11% of the voters have voted 6 – 9 times during various elections. 1% have voted more than 10 times and they are respondents who have also mentioned that they play an active role during elections and eagerly wait for the election results as well as all kinds of political news. 1% of the population are yet to vote as the respondents were mainly students who were below 18 years of age and yet to avail the right to vote.

The data clearly reveals that Indians participate during the election process to elect a capable leader.

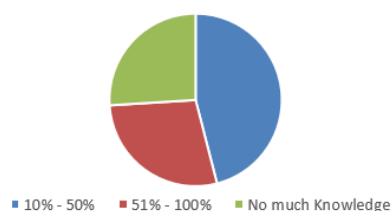
Table 08: Knowledge regarding election process as a variable

Discussing political happenings among family members, friends, colleagues, or any other informal groups as well through media helps in sensitizing regarding the election process.

Knowledge regarding election process	Respondents	Percentage
10% - 50%	130	46%
51% - 100%	81	28%
No much knowledge	74	26%

Source: Primary Data

Knowledge regarding election Process



Graph 8

The above table 8 implies that about 28% of the respondents are aware of politics and possess enough knowledge regarding election process. 46% of the respondents possess comparatively less knowledge either because they are not interested or lack time due to busy schedule. When asked about their opinion regarding the participation during election campaigns, majority were not keen to gain knowledge or participate in political activities. Inculcating interest in politics is the only way out to get the citizens to take part during the election process.

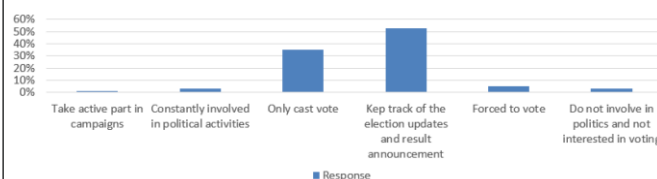
Table 09: Effectiveness in election participation as a variable

Effective participation during election process has a greater impact in voting behaviour. Lower turnout during election process is often associated with citizens not interested in political activities as they have lost trust in the political process.

Effectiveness in election participation	Respondents	Percentage
Take active part in campaigns	04	1%
Constantly involved in political activities	09	3%
Only cast vote	99	35%
Keeps track of the election updates and result announcement	152	53%
Forced to vote	15	5%
Do not involve in politics and not interested in voting	07	3%

Source: Primary Data

Effectiveness in election participation



Graph 9

The above table 9 indicates that about 53% of the respondents keep track of the election updates and follow up the with the result announcement. 35% of the respondents only cast vote and regard it as the mere duty of the citizen and not interested in any further news as they feel there exist corruption in the whole process. 5% of the respondents claimed that they were forced to vote either by family members, clique or politicians and also stated that there exist unfair practices. 3% of the respondents do not involve in politics and are not interested in voting because they are either busy with their schedule or not interested to involve themselves in any kind of political activities. 3% of the respondents constantly involved themselves in political activities. 1% of the respondents take active part in campaigns during elections.

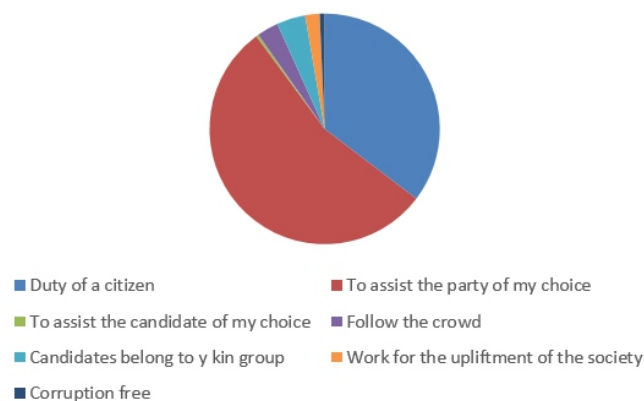
Table 10: Reasons for voting as a variable

Voting behaviour is complex in nature and various scholars have been trying to analyse the nature of the voting behaviour among the citizens of India.

Reasons for voting	Respondents	Percentage
Duty of a citizen	99	35%
To assist the party of my choice	154	54%
To assist the candidate of my choice	01	0.34%
Follow the crowd	10	3%
Candidates belong to my kin group	12	4%
Work for the upliftment of the society	07	2%
Corruption free	02	0.69%

Source: Primary Data

Reasons for voting



Graph 10

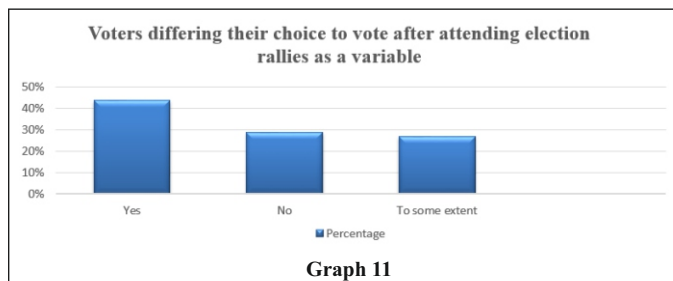
Respondents possess various views regarding the reasons why they vote. 54% of the respondents feel that they should assist the candidate of their choice and also take an active role in participating during elections. 35% of the respondents feel that it is their duty to vote as a citizen and involve themselves in all political activities. 4% of the respondents are of the view that they should support the candidates who belong to their kin group because if they are elected as representatives, they would support the community and assist them during necessity. 3% of the respondents follow the crowd and change their views about political party as well as the representatives as per the influence by the crowd. They are of the view that they have no much opinion regarding political happenings and change their opinion as per the influence. 2% of the respondents are of the view that they should work for the upliftment of the society. 0.69% of the respondents are of the view that they vote in order to select a responsible representative who is not corrupt in ruling. 0.34% of the respondents vote because they feel they should assist the candidate whom they support to win the election. Sensitizing the importance of voting is the priority of the civic authorities today otherwise the turnout of voters will decrease.

Table 11: Voters differing their choice to vote after attending election rallies as a variable

In India, Elections are celebrated like any other festival and the eagerness among people to cast their vote is also well viewed by the enthusiasm they reflect.

Voters differing their choice to vote after attending election rallies	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	126	44%
No	83	29%
To some extent	76	27%

Source: Primary Data



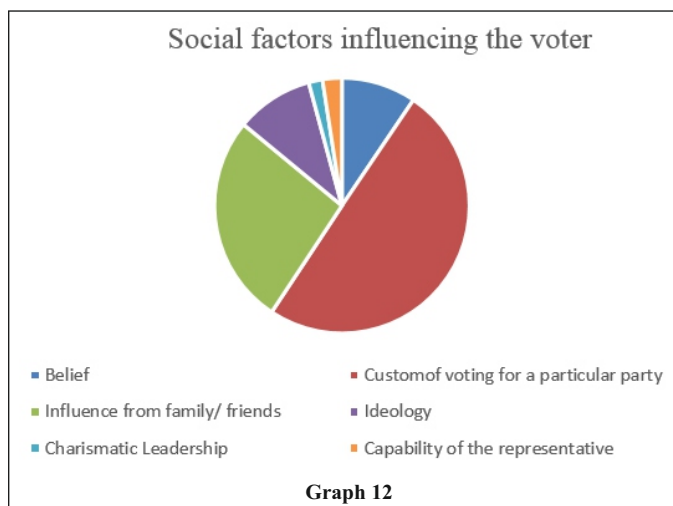
Campaigns popularize the candidate and party ideology. 44% of the respondents agree to the view that they have changed their views on whom to vote after taking part in election rallies. 29% of the respondents feel that they have chosen a candidate and will support the candidate till elected as representative and no campaigns can influence their views. 27% are of the view that attending various election campaigns change their view to some extent.

Table 12: Social factors influencing the voter as a variable

Understanding what factors effects the voters turnout during elections makes us analyse the social environment they belong to.

Social factors influencing the voter	Respondents	Percentage
Belief	27	9%
Custom of voting for a particular party	142	50%
Influence from family/ friends	76	26%
Ideology	28	10%
Charismatic leadership	05	2%
Capability of the representative	07	3%

Source: Primary Data



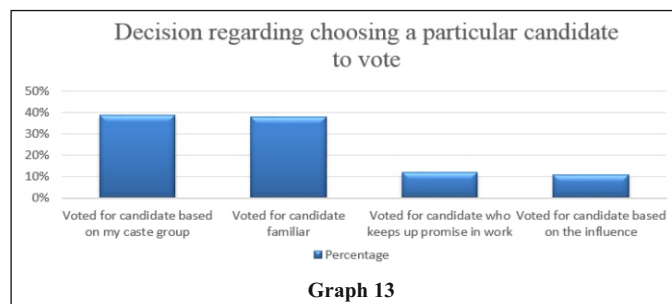
In some cases, the quote – Habits die hard seems to be right. Some respondents are of the view that they cannot change the party or candidate to whom they have been loyal from ages and hence whatever may be the situation they vote for the party or candidate they are familiar with. 50% of the respondents are of the view that they will continue to vote for the particular party as they have been accustomed to the custom of voting for a particular party. 26% of the respondents are of the view that they will vote for candidate or party who is decided by the family or friends group. 10% of the respondents go by the party ideology. 9% of the respondents are affected by the belief they hold and are adamant to change. 3% of the respondents vote for candidates who are capable of ruling. 2% of the respondents vote for candidate who are charismatic in nature, and it can include political leaders or media personalities.

Table 13: Decision regarding choosing a particular candidate to vote as a variable

Choosing a candidate depends on the qualities the representative possess. It could vary from leadership qualities, knowledgeable, sincere, ability to listen to the problems and issues faced by the citizens.

Decision regarding choosing a particular candidate to vote	Respondents	Percentage
Voted for candidate based on my caste group	111	39%
Voted for candidate familiar	108	38%
Voted for candidate who keeps up promise in work	34	12%
Voted for candidate based on the influence	32	11%

Source: Primary Data



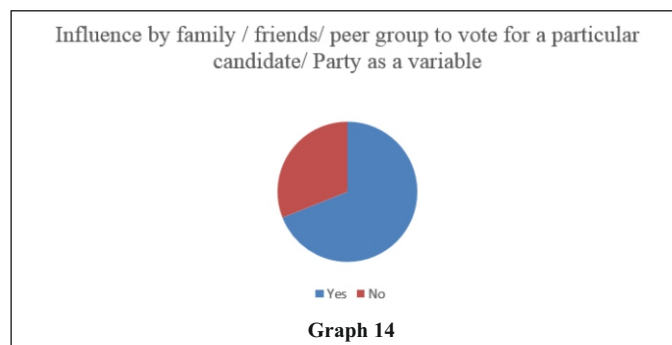
The table above indicates that a voters first step to choose a candidate depends on how capable they are able to address the issues and who also values citizens. 39% of the respondents are of the view that they vote for candidates who belongs to their castes group because the respondents felt voting for candidates from the same caste provides them with better assurance. 38% of the respondents voted for candidates based on their familiarity. Familiarity according to them yielded better benefits. 12% of the respondents prefer to vote for candidates who keeps up their promise at work and prompt in responding to citizens issues. 11% of the respondents prefer to vote for candidates recommended by their family or friends.

Table 14: Influence by family / friends/ peer group to vote for a particular candidate/ Party as a variable

The influence on choice of party preference has an impact on the state or country as a whole as some parties have a broad national appeal whereas others have a more local or regional existence only. Some party ideology also keeps changing as leaders change. So, choosing a party to vote is also a major task.

Influence by family / friends/ peer group to vote for a particular candidate/ Party	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	197	69%
No	88	31%

Source: Primary Data



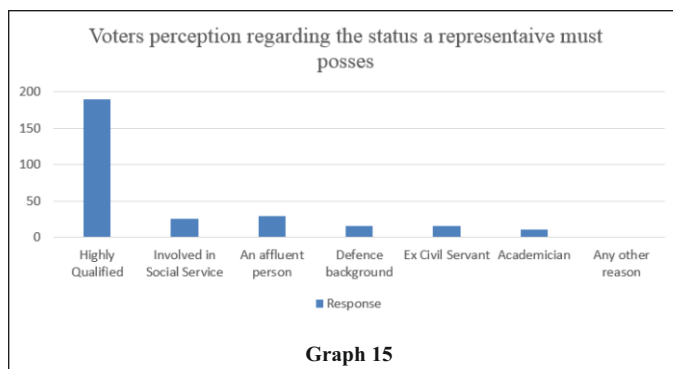
The above table indicates that 69% of the respondents were influenced by family, friends, or peer group. Political discussions among family and friends group lead them to believe and get inspired to vote for a particular party or candidate. As a voter, we decide which party will lead the country to progress. Some voters are of the view that strong neighbourhood influence which may overrule their decision and conclude which party or candidate they should cast their vote. 31% of the respondents are of the view that they vote for party or candidates purely based on their opinion.

Table 15: Voter's perception regarding the status a representative must possess as a variable

Being knowledgeable is important for a political leader in order to occupy a responsible position which gives a person the power of thinking, take up decisions and deliver their duty promptly to the nation.

Voter's perception regarding the status a representative must possess	Respondents	Percentage
Highly qualified (Postgraduate)	190	66%
Involved in social service	25	9%
An affluent person	29	10%
Defence background	15	5%
Ex civil servant	15	5%
Academician	11	4%
Any other reason	01	0.34%

Source: Primary Data



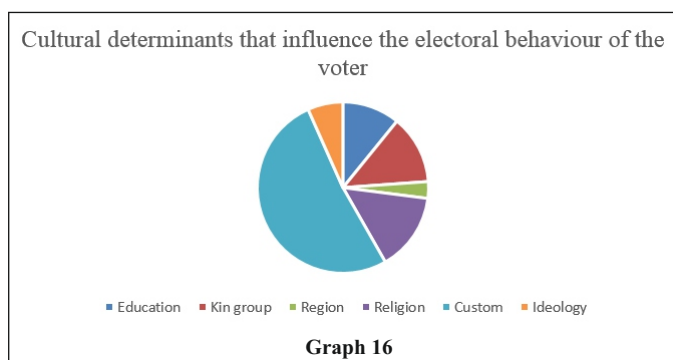
Majority of the respondents were in favour of educated political leaders. 66% of the respondents preferred highly qualified individuals as leaders. 10% of the respondents preferred person from affluent category as they feel they would be helpful to the people who are in need of financial help. 9% of the respondents are of the view that candidates contesting for election should be involved in social services so that they are more accountable to citizen's needs. 5% of the respondents are of the view that respondents should be from defence background because they feel there is more disciplined imposed and can reduce corruption. 5% of the respondents feel Ex civil servants would make better political leaders as they would be acclimated to administration and possess fairly good leadership qualities. 4% of the respondents strongly believe that leaders should be from academic background as they would be updated with knowledge regarding the happenings at the national as well as the international level. 0.34% of the respondents have opted to select other reason and was of the view that more than the qualification acquired, a leader must have administrative skill, be patriotic and work for the welfare of the nation.

Table 16: Cultural determinants that influence the electoral behaviour of the voter as a variable

Cultural determinants have influenced the pattern of voting among the people in India. The ideas, ideologies, beliefs, values, ways of behaving, thinking, language patterns and so on have an impact on the voter.

Cultural determinants that influence the electoral behaviour of the voter	Respondents	Percentage
Education	31	11%
Kin group	37	13%
Region	09	3%
Religion	42	15%
Custom	147	51%
Ideology	19	7%

Source: Primary Data



The above table indicates that respondents have been influenced by various cultural determinants and it has affected their pattern of voting. 51% of the respon-

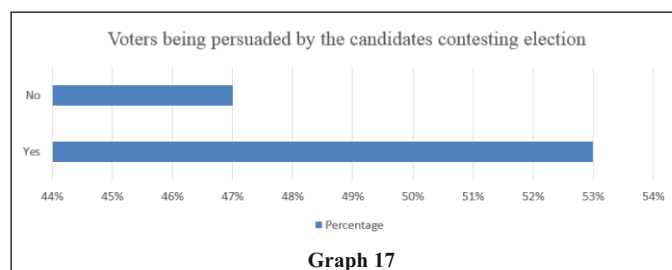
dents are of the view that custom norms have a major influence on their voting behaviour. 15% of the respondents quote religion and influence of religious group has affected their voting behaviour. 13% of the respondents are of the view that Kin group has a strong influence on their voting behaviour. 11% of the respondents are of the view that education and knowledge thus gained has assisted them to analyse the capability of each contestant and vote for the right candidate. 7% of the respondents are of the view that ideology which they have acquired over the years either from their family members or friends group has been influential in voting during elections. 3% of the respondents are of the view that the region that they belong to has an effect on their voting behaviour especially voters belonging to smaller area because the citizens imitate each other and there is a similar approach they follow in all their activities. Indian society is cultural bound as rightly pointed out by Bartolini (2011), A behaviourally based difference without an ideological knot or structural roots in society is also unlikely to last, which is an important reason why most parties try to establish a cultural or ideological underpinning in order to survive⁸.

Table 17: Voters being persuaded by the candidates contesting election as a variable

Vote buying is extremely widespread today. Election campaigns end up by distributing gifts and money to the voters.

Voters being persuaded by the candidates contesting election	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	151	53%
No	135	47%

Source: Primary Data



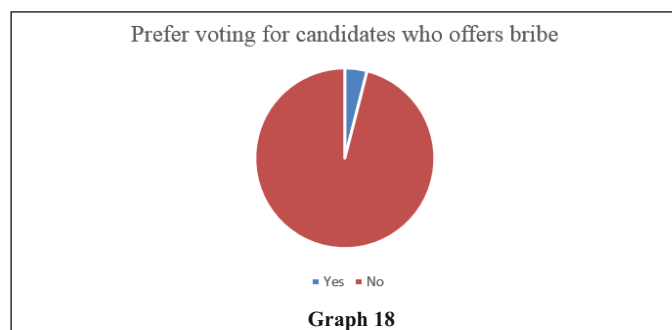
The above table indicates that respondents have been persuaded by the candidates with bribe during elections. 53% have agreed to politicians and party members approaching them with bribe during the election campaigns. This encourages corruption and capturing of polling booth at times and also citizens losing faith over their political leaders. 47% of the respondents have informed that they have not been persuaded by the politicians or party members during election campaigns.

Table 18: Prefer voting for candidates who offers bribe as a variable

Corruption is hard to measure as the act is carefully concealed. Trying to buy votes with cash and other gifts during elections is rampant in India.

Prefer voting for candidates who offers bribe	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	11	4%
No	274	96%

Source: Primary Data



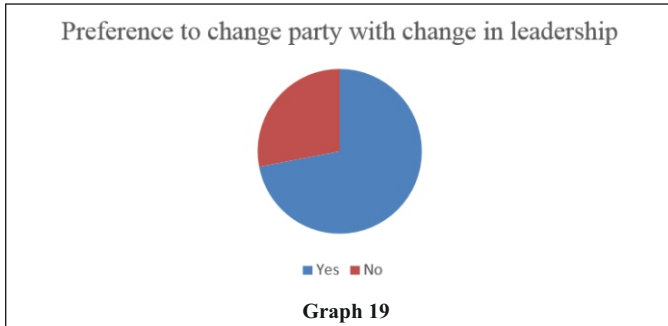
The above table reveal that respondents are trying to curb corruption by avoiding to accept bribe from politicians who are willing to persuade them. In one of the interaction a respondent revealed that though they are poor and in need of money, will only vote for the right candidate. There is a gradual shift in the mindset of people to curb corruption. 96% have responded that they would not prefer voting for candidate who offers bribe. 4% of the respondents have agreed to the fact that they would vote for candidate who offers to help them financially.

Table 19: Preference to change party with change in leadership as a variable

Voters at times decide to change party with the change in leadership. Improper leadership drives voters to change the party.

Preference to change party with change in leadership	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	205	72%
No	81	28%

Source: Primary Data



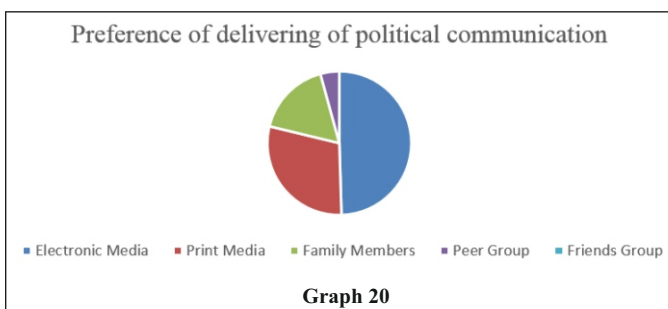
Some respondents have been loyal to certain party due to the ideology the political party possess and have been voting from ages but if the leaders are corrupt then the voters are of the view that they need to choose the right leader. The above table indicates that 72% of the respondents would change the party if the leader is incapable. 28% of the respondents would not change the party with the change of leader as they still cherish the party ideology. Possessing fair Leadership qualities is very important for a candidate contesting for election.

Table 20: Preference of delivering of political communication as a variable

The role of family and friends in conveying the political updates becomes more important than newspaper or any other media. Respondents claim that busy schedule of work and other obligations deny them from referring to the political updates from the media hence they prefer to discuss the political news with family members and friends group.

Preference of delivering of political communication	Respondents	Percentage
Electronic Media	105	38%
Print Media	62	22%
Family members	36	12%
Peer Group	09	3%
Friends Group	73	25%

Source: Primary Data



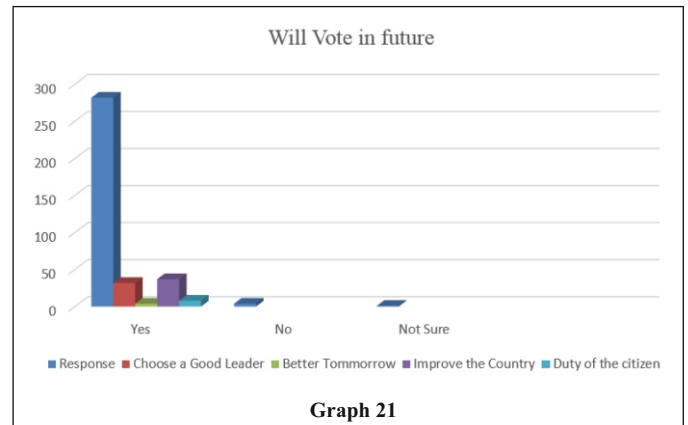
The above table reflects that 38% of the respondents would prefer to receive update regarding election process through electronic media mainly by watching the Television. During the conversation with few respondents, they were of the view that they would prefer to watch the updates on Television and some of the respondents from rural area mentioned that they listen to the news telecasted in Radio as they simultaneously perform their occupation. 25% of the respondents prefer to gather news from the friends group as it gives them excitement to listen to informal group talks. 22% of the respondents especially elderly citizens prefer to read the news in newspaper. 12% prefer to discuss the political happenings among family members and this category of voters are influenced by family members on whom to vote. 3% of the voters prefer to discuss with peer group and this includes mainly the students who discuss politics with their batchmates.

Table 21: Respondents view on voting in future as a variable

Majority of the population in India is eligible to cast their vote but only a few are enthusiastic to vote. Some have lost interest due to the increase corruption. India needs to take a stand to encourage the voters to cast their vote as many skip going to the polling booths to vote for various reasons.

Will vote in future	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	282	98%
No	04	1%
Not Sure	01	0.34%

Source: Primary Data



The above table indicates the willingness of the voter to cast vote in future and 98% of the respondents have mentioned their willingness to vote in future for the development of the country. 1% of the respondent refuse to vote and 0.34% of the respondents are not sure to vote. When discussed they revealed that there was a lag in the performance of the political party, corruption was rampant, image of most of the leaders was tarnished as they were not fair enough in their duty.

HYPOTHESIS:

Voting behaviour is affected by ideology, customs, social identity, gender bias, emotions, and family decisions. The rationality of the voters is restrained as the inherent preconceptions override their rational thought. Keeping in view of the objectives, the following hypotheses were framed after carefully analysing with similar studies so that there is no recurrence.

H1: There is no significant relation between Educational Qualification in the participation in election and reasons for voting.

	Educational Qualification	Election Participation	Reason for Voting
Educational Qualification	1		
Election Participation	0.027196	1	
Reason for Voting	0.000625	0.04566	1

Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between educational qualification in relation to election participation and reasons for voting. The Correlation between Education Qualification and Election Participation is 0.027196 which means there is a moderate positive relationship between the variables. The Correlation between Education Qualification and Reasons for voting is 0.000625 which means there is a minor positive relationship between the variables. The Correlation between Election Participation and Reasons for voting is 0.04566 which means there is a moderate positive relationship between the variables. Which indicates that as there is an increase in Educational Qualification people actively participate in rendering their franchise as they are aware of their duty as citizens in appointing a representative.

H2: There is no significant relation between knowledge about election on deferring the choice of the candidate after witnessing campaigns and deciding whom to vote.

	knowledge about Election	choice of the candidate after participating in the political rallies	Choice of the candidate
knowledge about Election	1		
choice of the candidate after participating in the political rallies	0.0268	1	
Choice of the candidate	0.071827	0.008079	1

Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between educational qualification in relation to election participation and reasons for voting. The Correlation between knowledge about election and the choice of differing in choosing the candidate to vote is 0.0268 which means there is a minor positive relationship between the variables. Depending on the Knowl-

edge a person has regarding election process helps the individual to choose the right representative after attending election campaigns and understanding the candidate's abilities.

The Correlation between knowledge about election and the choice of a candidate to vote is 0.071827 which means there is a moderate positive relationship between the variables. Depending on the Knowledge a person has regarding election process helps the individual to choose the right representative based on the candidate's abilities.

The Correlation between choice of the candidate after participating in the political rallies and the choice of a candidate to vote 0.008079 which means there is a moderate positive relationship between the variables. Attending election campaigns helps the individual to choose the right representative based on the candidate's abilities.

H3: There is no significant relation between the occupation of the voter in relation to the social factors and the influence of the family/friends/ peer group as well on a particular political party or candidate.

	Social Factors	Influenced by family/friend/peer group/ others to vote for a particular candidate/ Party?	Occupation
Social factors	1		
Influenced by family/friend/peer group/ others to vote for a particular candidate/ Party	0.34162324	1	
Occupation	0.123531941	0.085711391	1

Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between social factors such as affiliation to Caste, charismatic character, education, locality in relation to the influence of family/ friend and peer group to vote for particular candidate or party who also is influence by the same social factors. The Correlation between social factors and the influence of family/ friend and peer group to vote for particular candidate or party is 0.34162324 which means there is a strong positive relationship between the two variables. Social factors and influence from family, friends and peer group has a greater impact on an individual while choosing a representative.

The Correlation between social factors and the influence of one's occupation to vote for particular candidate or party is 0.123531941 which means there is a negligible positive relationship between the two variables. Few individuals irrespective of their higher occupational status still gets influenced by the social factors which they have a strong bonding for.

The Correlation between and the influence of family/ friend and peer group to vote for candidate or party and the occupational influence to vote for a particular candidate is 0.085711391 which means there is a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. This clearly states that individuals are influence by their friend's group or Peer group irrespective of their higher occupational status because during interaction with friends group of the same organisation has an impact and influence on an individual's decision-making process.

H4: There is no significant relation between age of the voter influencing the cultural determinants and the influence of family/friends/peer group regarding their political view.

	Cultural determinants	political party ideology influenced by family/ friends/peer group?	Age
Cultural determinants	1		
political party ideology influenced by family/ friends/peer group?	0.012695	1	
Age	0.016844	0.038621	1

Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between cultural determinants such as traditions, customs, ideology, religion in relation to the influence of family/ friend and peer group on party ideology to vote for particular candidate or party who also has is captivated by the same Cultural determinants. The Correlation between Cultural determinants and the influence of the political ideology of family/ friend and peer group to vote for particular candidate or party is 0.012695 which means there is a minor positive relationship between the two variables. Cultural determinants are social in nature and hence the influence of culture is strong on the people living in the society or community and it impact on every activity an individual is involved in and thus the

political activity of the individual while choosing a representative is also impacted by the cultural influence.

The Correlation between the influence of Cultural determinants and the age of an individual to vote for particular candidate or party is 0.016844 which means there is a minor positive relation between the two variables. Human beings are born in society comprising of culture and the culture is practised throughout their life and individuals get habituated to what is learnt from an earlier age and hence is also found in their political activities.

The Correlation between the influence of the political ideology of family/ friend and peer group and age to vote for particular candidate or party is 0.038621 which indicates that there is a moderate positive relation between the two variables. Family, friends, and peer group ideology is imparted to a person during their interaction, and this grows as individual gets older.

ANALYSIS & RESULTS:

Every activity in India is based on caste, religion, and family. Election campaigns also make use of these sentiments which Indians treasure. It is easy for political parties to mesmerize people and influence them through their campaigns. In order to analyse these factors Pearson's correlation coefficient was implemented based on the primary data collected from Bangalore – rural as well as urban areas. Family members and peer group also is an added factor which influence their voting behaviour.

The result show that the cultural influence has a strong influence on the respondents voting behaviour. All factors though are seemingly independent variables but are inter- dependent and in turn influence each other. Examining each of this will clearly help us relate to the voting behaviour and identify the linkages between each variable. The survey of the study was conducted between the time period of November 2021 – September 2022.

The analysis shows the following outcome. Educated people are aware of their duty as citizens in appointing a representative and actively participate in rendering their franchise Family members, friend's group or Peer group can influence the voting behaviour irrespective of their higher occupational status. Culture has a major role to play during elections on the voting behaviour of the citizens.

Sociological study often tends to look to the socio-cultural determinants that influence the voting behaviour of an individual such as the role of caste, family, religion, ideology and so on. Citizens cast their vote based on these factors.

SUGGESTIONS:

Inculcate political knowledge among the citizen of India and urge them to know about the political happenings in the country at least during elections.

Create better awareness and knowledge about existing electoral process and their right to cast vote through reading newspaper and electronic media needs to be further promoted in rural areas.

Conduction of frequent and too many elections lead to voters absenting themselves from voting.

Political leaders need to be more vigilant because not adhering to some of the civic needs abstain the voters from voting.

Less interference of the political party on the citizens during elections.

Create better political environment by avoiding violence.

Encourage voter participation especially use of regional language would prove beneficial in remote areas, conduct voter registration campaigns, and also involve participation of the citizens in all political activities specially the youth.

Introduction of E – Voting procedure in a secured portal with non-interference by an outsider will assist in increasing the number of voters turnout during elections. This will also be helpful to professionals who have a busy schedule and unable to visit the polling booths. Women might also feel secured to vote if such a system is introduced.

CONCLUSION:

From the study it is evident that voting behaviour in India is influenced by the cultural determinants. Voters in India always have a cultural affiliation when they vote. Culture is their way of life and vote based on their caste, ideology, religion, customary norms, influence from family members and so on. Though there are some changes taking place the voters may consider deep – seated social and cultural biases. Understanding and examining these variables is necessary in order to identify the cultural impact on the voters. The study was a descriptive one and both primary and secondary data was collected. The analysis clearly reveals the impact of culture even on the political activity of the people in India.

The analysis also explored the views of the voters in order to understand their response to various indicators and also the significance of their educational qualification, professional Status, Voters knowledge regarding election process, and

participation in election campaigns. All these analysis supported in understanding the topic of study.

The crucial challenge is decision on voting should be provided to the individuals which will help them become more aware of their rights as a citizen.

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